

AIRBORNE SIGNALS  
OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION

INAUGURAL MEETING

AUG. 9. 1947

DUKE OF YORKS HQ. CHELSEA



SOUVENIR SONGBOOK

It is a great day, this our first Old Comrades meeting, the sort of day we used to talk about rather wistfully during the war, when we should all meet together in our demob suits and be able to say exactly what we thought about the Sergeant-Major, or the Commanding Officer for that matter! It is a great joy to us “old sweats” that we are able to meet here at the Headquarters of the 16<sup>th</sup>. Airborne Div. Signal Regt. T.A (The Middlesex Yeomanry) and we are very grateful to them for their hospitality. In return we have a very important duty to them. They are our own Territorial Regt. And it is up to us to help them all we can. If we are able, then volunteer to join them, and if we cannot do that then help them in their recruiting by encouraging our friends who are suitable to volunteer. We know the sort of man they want. Men like our comrades who should have been with us here today, those that now lie in Africa and Sicily, Italy, Normandy and Southern France, in Holland and Germany, whose names we can never forget. They would have loved this party and I know they’ll be wishing us luck and singing the songs with us. Let us enjoy ourselves tonight and when it is over we’ll look forward to the next time and make sure that all our friends who did not hear about this one, hear about the next. It is wonderful to see you all and bless you.

Peter Bradley.

**These are all the songs you know so well and sang so often  
in circumstances much different from these, but in  
company with many of the faces you see around you now.**

**They are songs only for Airborne Soldiers; they belong to  
no-one else and never will; they are our own.**

**Too long has elapsed since we gathered to sing them. Let  
this book therefore be a souvenir of our meeting again; let  
it be a link to bind us and remind us that we must return  
time and time again to sing them.**

## **“Wings”**

*(Sung to the tune of Eternal Father)*

Eternal Father, King of Kings,  
Who made us fly and gave us Wings,  
Oh, hook us up and check our strops  
And guard us all when ere we drop.  
And bid thy winds now cease to roar  
Whilst we are standing at the door.

Oh teach thy boys in blue to pack,  
And bid thine Angels throttle back  
Lets all look up to heaven and see  
A well-developed canopy;  
Oh guard us from the tangled lines  
Preserve the contour of our spines

Then in our downward flight uplift  
And help us to assess our drift  
From “Trees” and “Water” save our souls  
And never let us backward fall  
That we may safely land we pray  
And live to Jump another day.

H. Fairhurst. Capt  
R. Signals

## **“Jumping through the hole”**

*(To the tune of “Knees up Mother Brown”)*

When first I went to Ringway  
My CO he advised  
“Take lots and lots of underwear  
You’ll need it I surmise”  
But I replied, “By Gad, Sir  
Whatever may befall,  
I’ll always keep my trousers clean  
When jumping through the hole

*Chorus:*

Oh, jumping through the hole  
Jumping through the hole;  
I’ll always keep my trousers clean  
When jumping through the hole  
I went into the hanger  
Instructor by my side,  
And on Kilkennys Circus  
I had many a glorious ride  
Said he “On these are gadgets  
We’ll teach you how to fall  
And keep your feet together  
When jumping through the hole.

I hit the pack  
I rang the bell

I twisted twenty times,  
I got both feet entangled in the rigging  
lines,  
But floating upside down to earth  
I didn't mind at all,  
For I had kept my trousers clean when  
Jumping through the hole.

And now I wear a badge, boys  
Of badges it's the best,  
It makes me feel more proud than do  
The hair upon my chest.  
To all admiring men it doth  
A daring deed extoll;  
The keeping of the trousers clean  
When jumping through the hole.

## **“Happy Landings”**

*(To the tune of “Lilli Marlene”)*

Standing very lonely in the aperture  
If my chute will open, I really am not sure.  
Feet and knees together is my aim,  
And so I am singing this refrain  
“With feet and knees together”, so they will take the  
strain.

Going thro’ the hold I held my trousers tight,  
Keep on looking upwards and I shall be alright  
Don’t wave your legs and arms about,  
I hear those RAF Instructors shout,  
Your feet and knees together, so they will take the  
strain.

When my chute is open the seat straps I will shift,  
Take up my position, assess my line of drift,  
Then when I’m nearly on the floor  
I say this old refrain once more;  
“With feet and knees together, so they will take the  
strain.

*Alternative to verse 1.*

Standing in the door way waiting for the light,  
Clutching at the kit-bag and paralysed with fright  
Watching the earth roll by below  
Oh dare I go?  
I don’t think so  
For Christ it’s never worth it

For two and six a day

**“He aint Gonna Jump no More”**

*(To the tune of “John Browns Body”)*

O, We fly in flicking Halies at five hundred flicking  
feet

We fly on in the flicking snow and in the flicking sleet  
And when we think were flying South were flying flicking  
North.

*Chorus.*

Glory, Glory, what a hell of a way to die  
Glory, Glory, what a hell of a way to die  
Glory, Glory, what a hell of a way to die  
Cause he aint gonna jump no more

“Are you ready”? said the Sergeant  
to the rookie in the plane

“Yes, I’m ready”, said the hero  
and they hooked him up again

He ripped his pack, he rang the bell and went down  
like a drain

And he aint gonna Jump no more.

A thousand thoughts came quickly flashing through  
His mind

He thought about his girls he left the girl he’d left  
behind

He thought about the Medics and wondered  
what they’d find

Cause he aint gonna jump no more

The RAF were hopping mad, and jeeps were running wild  
Many a month had passed since a chute of theirs had failed  
The Medics just stood around and rolled their sleeves

and smiled

For he aint gonna jump no more

There was blood upon the rigging lines and blood upon  
the chute

There was blood upon the ground and a squirting  
From his boot

They wrapped him in his canopy and didn't he look cute

For he aint gonna jump no more

I'd like to find the Pilot who forgot to throttle back

*(Repeat twice)*

*Chorus as before*

I'd like to find the WAAF who put the blanket in my chute

*(Repeat twice)*

I'd like to find the Sergeant who forgot to hook me up

*(Repeat twice)*

They scraped him off the tarmac like a lump of

Strawberry jam

*(Repeat twice)*

## **“The Glider Song”**

*(To the tune of “Bless them all”)*

Now they say there’s a Glider just leaving its base  
Bound for enemy shore,  
Heavily laden with pals and me  
Going by air cause be can’t go by sea  
So were saying good-bye to em all  
As into the glider we crawl.  
We’re unlucky fellows,  
We’ve no propellers;  
So cheer up my lads bless em all

### ***Chorus***

Learn to glide, learn to glide,  
To bank and to turn and to slide,  
Were unlucky fellows,  
We’ve no propellers;  
So cheer up my lads bless them all.

Now they say the Red Devils are knight of the air,  
Sunshine or rain they don’t care;  
They’re loading their gliders with guns and their Jeeps  
They’re going by air to give Jerry the creeps,  
So we’re saying good-bye to em all  
As into our gliders we crawl,  
We’re packing our kit-bags  
Along with our sick-bags  
So cheer up my lads bless em all.

## **“In the Merry Month of May”**

Around her legs she wears a silk garter,  
She wears it in the springtime in the merry month of May,  
And if you ask her why the hell she wears it,  
She wears it for a parachutist far, far, away.

### ***Chorus***

Far away, far away, (Repeat last line of each verse in turn)

Behind the door her father keeps a shot gun,  
He keeps it in the springtime in the merry month of May,  
And if you ask him why the hell he keeps it,  
He keeps it for a parachutist far, far away,

Around the park she wheels a perambulator  
She wheels it in the springtime in the merry month of  
May,  
And if you ask her why the hell she wheels it,  
She wheels it for a parachutist far, far away.

Around her arm she wears a sombre armband,  
She wears it in the springtime in the merry month of May,  
And if you ask her why the hell she wears it  
She wears it for a parachutist six foot down.

## **“Ten little Paratroopers”**

*(To the tune of “The Hall of Kirriemuir”)*

Number one was first to go, he was first to jump,  
His chute never opened so he didn't feel the bump.

### ***Chorus***

Singing whull dae it this time. Wha' dae is it noo.  
Yinna did it last time canna dae it noo.

The next man to jump he was number two,  
He saw what happened to number one and now has RTU.

Number three was next to go he didn't bend his knee,  
He fractured both his thighs and is category F.

The next man to go he was number four  
He didn't hook up his static line before he left the door.

After him was number five  
His parachute opened so he reached the ground alive.

Number six was next to go, he didn't do so well,  
He fell out of his harness and went right down to hell.

The next man to go was number seven,  
He came down on his head and went right up to heaven.

The next man to go was number eight,  
His parachute developed but opened much too late.

The next man to go was number nine,  
His legs and arms got tangled up in his rigging lines.  
The last man to jump was number ten,

He had a Roman Candle so he'll never jump agin.

**“Come sit by my Side”**

*(To the tune of “Red River Valley”)*

As we entered our mess room one evening,  
We received our instructions to go;  
So we bombed up our planes and got ready,  
For the job we were going to do.

So come sit by my side in a hall,  
Do not hasten to bid me adieu;  
Just remember the poor parachutist  
And the job he is trying to do.

When the red light, does on, we are ready,  
For the Sergeant to Shout “Number one”.  
Then we all huddled close together  
To go out through the hole one by one.

When you're just coming in for a landing  
Please remember the Sergeants advice  
Keep your feet and knees close together  
And you'll land on the ground very nice.

So come raise up your glasses – be steady –  
Drink a toast to the men of the sky  
Drink a toast the men dead already,  
And three cheers for the next man to die.

